



July 7, 2021

Honorable Speaker Therese M. Terlaje  
Chairperson, Committee on Health, Land, Justice and Culture  
36<sup>th</sup> Guam Legislature  
Guam Congress Building  
163 Chalan Santo Papa  
Hagatna, Guam 96910

**Subject: National Association of Social Workers, Guam Chapter  
Written Testimony in SUPPORT of Bill 112-36 (COR)**

Bill 112-36 (COR), introduced by Speaker Therese M. Terlaje, Senator Telo T. Taitague, Senator Joanne Brown, Senator Joe S. San Agustin, Senator B. Anthony Ada, Senator Telena C. Nelson, Senator Christopher M. Duenas, Senator Clinton Ridgell, Senator Amanda Shelton, Senator Jose P. Terlaje, and Senator Sabina F. Perez; Relative to Medical Malpractice in the Territory of Guam

Håfa Adai Honorable Speaker Therese Terlaje,

Si Yu'os Ma'åse for the opportunity to provide testimony for Bill 112-36. We, the National Association of Social Workers, Guam Chapter, offer full **SUPPORT** of Bill 112-36 providing reform to the Guam Medical Malpractice Mandatory Arbitration Act that currently stands today.

In our review, Bill 112-36 protects a victim's right to legal action, reducing economic barriers that deter and prohibit potential victims of medical malpractice injuries from accessing due arbitration, while ensuring that a medical malpractice case is properly reviewed before moving forward through the court system, mediation, or arbitration. The justification for this medical malpractice reform comes from the voices of concerned families of alleged victims about the high cost of the arbitration process service as a barrier to asserting viable medical malpractice claims in the pursuit of justice, as social workers it is our ethical responsibility to consider the petitions of our marginalized and socio-economically disadvantaged populations in our community.

There are several professional social work core ethical values that are relevant to this legislation and mandate our involvement in this bill's advocacy. These professional core values are outlined as follows:

**Value:** *Social Justice*

**Ethical Principle:** *Social workers challenge social injustice*

Social workers pursue social change, particularly with and on behalf of vulnerable and oppressed individuals and groups of people. Social workers' social change efforts are focused primarily on issues of poverty, unemployment, discrimination, and other forms of social injustice. These activities seek to promote sensitivity to and knowledge about oppression and cultural and ethnic diversity. Social workers strive to ensure access to needed information, services, and resources; equality of opportunity; and meaningful participation in decision making for all people.

**Value:** *Integrity*

**Ethical Principle:** *Social workers behave in a trustworthy manner.*

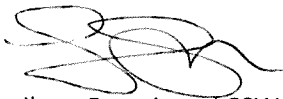
Social workers are continually aware of the profession's mission, values, ethical principles, and ethical standards and practice in a manner consistent with them. Social workers should take measures to care for themselves professionally and personally. Social workers act honestly and responsibly and promote ethical practices on the part of the organizations with which they are affiliated.

**Value:** *Competence*

**Ethical Principle:** *Social workers practice within their areas of competence and develop and enhance their professional expertise.*

Social workers continually strive to increase their professional knowledge and skills and to apply them in practice. Social workers should aspire to contribute to the knowledge base of the profession.

As social workers we are also committed to our professional code of ethics: ethical principles and ethical standards of care and thus understand the utmost importance of these values in our service to our community. Many of us are also licensed clinical professionals that are required to maintain professional liability insurance as mental health practitioners. In our work, we remain in support of this bill as we prioritize our continued accountability to the people we serve.



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